Coordination Committee on Monitoring of Prices reviews the price scenario and advises the concerned authorities to take appropriate and timely action. Efforts are being made to increase the production. Commodities which are in short supply are being imported to supplement their easy availability in the market. Import of sugar, edible vegetable palmolien and cotton have been placed under Open General Licence (OGL). PDS in being strengthened and streamlined so that its benefits reach even in the inaccessible areas. State Governments are being advised from time to time to take stringent actions against hoarders, blackmarketeers and such anti-social activists under the Essential Commodities Act, 1955, and similar other legislations.

Food subsidy in GDP

3450. SHRI M.A. BABY: Will the Minister of CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) what is the share of the food subsidy in the country's gross domestic products; and

(b) what is the percentage of population living below the powerty line?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KAMALUDDIN AHMED): (a) The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) for the year 1992-93, as per provisional and quick estimate, is Rs. 6,27,900 crores. The food subsidy for the year 1992-93 was Rs. 2785 crores, which is 0.44% of the GDP estimate for the year.

(b) The percentage of below poverty line population in the country to the total population as on 1st March, 1988, is estimated to be 29.9%.

National Policy on PDS

3451. SHRI SARADA MOHANTY: Will the Minister of CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) the salient features of the National Policy on Public Distribution System;

(b) whether the needy and deserving consumers are not able to get the real benefits of PDS; and

(c) if so, the steps taken to modify the National Policy and to ensure benefits to all types of consumers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KAMALUDDIN AHMED): (a) to (c). The Advisory Council on Public Distribution System (PDS) in its 15th meeting held in March, 1993 passed a resolution on the need to evolve a National Policy on PDS, which should focus on the need to allocate larger and more meaningful quantities of foodgrains to the really needy and deserving sections of the society. The Government set up a Committee of State Ministers to formulate recommendations in this regard.

The recommendations made by the Committee of Ministers include the following:

(i) Given the present constraints in the availability of foodgrains it is imperative that at least 20 kg. are made available per month to every family of the vulnerable population through the PDS.

(ii) In order to ensure that larger and more meaningful quantities should reach the really needy and poorer sections, it is inescapable that the realatively better off sections of the population are excluded from access to the PDS in respect of foodgrains.

(iii) Considering the difficulties in translating the income criterion for exculsion of relatively better off